UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.241/37
6 June 1995

ENGLISH
Original : ENGLISH

INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR
THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES
EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR
DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARY IN AFRICA
Seventh session
Nairobi, 7-18 August 1995
Agenda item 2

ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION

Note by the Secretariat

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology	2
III.	First meeting of the Committee on Science and Technology: Timing and Agenda	3
IV.	Areas of scientific and technological cooperation	3
V.	The Roster of Independent experts	3
VI.	Ad Hoc Panels	3
	Annex	5

GE.95-61691

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution entitled "Work Programme for the Interim Period" adopted at its sixth session (document A/AC.241/L.24), the INCD decided to allocate to Working Group II the responsibility to carry out the preparatory work for the Conference of the Parties (COP) on the following agenda item:

"Organization of scientific and technological cooperation, in particular the terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology, the establishment and maintenance of a roster of independent experts, and the terms of reference and modalities of work of any ad hoc panels that the Conference of the Parties may decide to appoint."

In the same resolution, the INCD further requested the Secretariat to prepare a document on this question with a view to facilitating the deliberations of the Committee at the seventh session.

2. The present document was prepared by the Secretariat in response to this request. It examines briefly the main issues arising with respect to the organization of scientific and technological cooperation. These flow mainly from article 24 of the Convention, in the context of articles 16, 17, 18 and 25. While references are made to possible options in several instances, this is done for the sole purpose of facilitating consideration of these questions.

3. At the sixth session of the INCD, the Chairman announced his intention to make preliminary proposals on the issues related to scientific and technological cooperation, early in the seventh session.

II. Terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology

4. Article 24, paragraph 1 of the Convention provides that "A Committee on Science and Technology is hereby established as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties...". To give effect to this provision, the same article further stipulates that the Conference of the Parties shall decide, at its first session, on the terms of reference of the Committee.

5. In order to meet the requirements of article 24, it would appear necessary to initiate drafting of the terms of reference during the interim period with a view to the submission of a final draft to the COP for approval at its first session.

6. The terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology might include provisions relating to:

a) the mandate of the Committee on Science and Technology;

b) the nature and timing of its report to the Conference of the Parties; and

c) the modalities for operating the ad hoc panels and the roster of experts from which they will be constituted.

7. At the seventh session of the INCD, Working Group II is expected to consider how to proceed with the preparation, during the interim period, of draft terms of reference for submission to the first session of the COP and give the Secretariat appropriate guidance in this regard.

III. First meeting of the Committee on Science and Technology: Timing and Agenda

8. Article 24, paragraph 1 of the Convention provides that the Committee on Science and Technology *"shall meet in conjunction with the ordinary sessions of the Conference of the Parties..."*.

9. During the first session of the Conference of the Parties, the Committee on Science and Technology could discuss its programme of work and initiate substantive discussions of selected priority issues. To this end, INCD members could be invited to communicate to the Secretariat their proposals with respect to appropriate agenda items for the first meeting of the Committee. Working Group II would consider these various proposals during the interim period. Adequate background material could be prepared in advance by the Secretariat drawing on outside expertise, including consultants and competent United Nations agencies.

IV. Areas of scientific and technological cooperation

10. Several provisions of the Convention contain indications or guidance with respect to specific areas of cooperation in science and technology. The annex to the present document provides an indicative list of such areas of cooperation together with a reference to the relevant articles. For ease of reference, the issues are presented in a summary form. While no reference is made to the regional implementation annexes in the annex to the present document, it should be borne in mind that, in some cases, they provide details on how cooperation in the relevant fields should be carried out.

V. The Roster of Independent experts

11. Article 24, paragraph 2 of the Convention provides that the COP *"shall establish and maintain a roster of independent experts with expertise and experience in the relevant fields"*. It further provides that *"the roster shall be based on nominations received in writing from the Parties, taking into account the need for a multidisciplinary approach and broad geographical representation"*.

12. During the interim period, Working Group II may wish to consider how the roster could be established, for subsequent formal consideration by the Conference of the Parties. A key consideration would be the type of expertise that might be considered as relevant for a timely and effective implementation of activities envisaged under the Convention.

VI. Ad Hoc Panels

13. Article 24, paragraph 3 of the Convention provides that the Conference of the Parties *"may, as necessary, appoint ad hoc panels to provide it, through the Committee, with information and advice on specific issues regarding the state of*

the art in fields of science and technology relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. These panels shall be composed of experts whose names are taken from the roster, taking into account the need for a multidisciplinary approach and broad geographical representation. These experts shall have scientific backgrounds and field experience and shall be appointed by the Conference of the Parties on the recommendation of the Committee. The Conference of the Parties shall decide on the terms of reference and the modalities of work of these panels."

14. Based on the above paragraph, the Conference of the Parties has the ability to establish *ad hoc* panels "as necessary". With respect to the terms of reference, the Conference of the Parties, on the recommendation of the Committee on Science and Technology, could adopt a set of guidelines applicable to any panel that may be established. Such guidelines could include:

- the number of members on a panel;
- the duration and number of meetings; and
- the method of reporting to the COP.

15. However, whether or not the Conference of the Parties adopts such overall guidelines, the last sentence of article 24, paragraph 3 would seem to envisage specific terms of reference for each panel, depending on the subject matter to be addressed. This is necessary to tailor the composition, duration, mandate and other characteristics of any panel to the requirements of the substantive issue to be examined.

ANNEX

SUMMARY OF KEY AREAS OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION IN THE CONVENTION

Collection, analysis and exchange of information

- Coordination of collection, analysis and exchange of relevant data/information (Article 16)
- Establishment and strengthening of local, national, subregional and regional early warning systems for periods of adverse climatic variation, in a form suitable for use by users at all levels (Articles 16 and 10(2)(d))
- Strengthening of the global network of institutions and facilities through *inter alia* the use of compatible standards and the linkage of national, subregional and regional centres more closely with global information sources (Article 16 (a))
- Development of integrated sets of indicators to evaluate the implementation of the Convention, including action programmes (Article 16 (c))
- Exchange of information on local and traditional knowledge (Article 16 (g))

Research

- Promotion of joint research programmes between national, subregional, regional and international research organizations (Article 17 (f))
- Establishment of research priorities in action programmes at all levels and the periodic review of research priorities by COP on advice of Committee on Science and Technology (Article 17 (2))

Technology

- Promotion, financing and/or facilitation of financing of technology transfer, acquisition, adaptation and development (Article 18)
- Full utilization of existing information systems and clearing houses at all levels for the dissemination of information on available technologies (Article 18 (1) (a))
- Facilitation of technology cooperation among affected country Parties (Article 18 (1) (c))
- Extension of technology cooperation with affected developing countries, including through joint ventures, especially to foster alternative livelihoods (Article 18 (1) (d))

- Preparation of inventories of traditional and local technology, knowledge, know-how and practices and support of the dissemination of such technologies (Article 18 (2))

Networking

- Survey and evaluation by Committee on Science and Technology of relevant existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies willing to become units of a network to support implementation of the Convention (Article 25 (1))

- Recommendation by COP of elements of network to implement the Convention, as well as its operational modalities and time frame (Article 25 (3))

Capacity Building

- Enhancement of national climatological, meteorological and hydrological capabilities (Article 10 (d))

- Development and strengthening of national, subregional and regional research capabilities in affected developing countries, giving particular attention to multidisciplinary and participative socio-economic research (Article 17 (d))

- Strengthening of capacity of affected developing countries in collecting, analyzing and exchanging information (Article 19 (1) (g))

- Training of decision makers, managers and personnel responsible for drought early warning information (Article 19 (1) (i))

- Establishment/strengthening of networks of regional education and training centres, to be coordinated by an institution designated for that purpose (Article 19 (4))